

Environmental Health & Safety

Hearing Protection

Your Hearing is important, protect it!

Cells and nerves in the inner ear are destroyed by continuous exposure to loud noise. If enough cells and nerves are destroyed, hearing can be permanently damaged.

EH&S survey of common power tool and tractors for noise levels (Feb 2010, partial listing)

<u>Hand power tools</u>	<u>Noise to Ear distance</u>	<u>Exposure (dBA)</u>
Weed eater	2' when in hands	93-95 in use
SawzAll	2' when in hands	94-96 at idle / 95-96 when cutting wood
DeWALT circular saw	2' when in hands	80-83 at idle / 94-96 when cutting wood
John Deere 245 Tractor	3' for operator	84-85 at idle 95 with PTO idle

OSHA's daily limit is 85 dB

Steps to prevent hearing damage

1. Wear earplugs when exposed to loud noise & lesser noise for long periods*¹
2. Reduce exposure to noise outside of the workplace
3. Use sound-absorbing materials
4. Do not use several noisy machines at once
5. Do not drown out unwanted noise with other sounds
6. If at risk for hearing loss, have your hearing tested once a year

Hearing Protection

1. Single-Use Earplugs – Self-forming and work as well as most molded earplugs (most common)
2. Molded Earplugs – Must be individually fitted and can be disposable or reusable
3. Earmuffs – Require a perfect seal around the ear

How Loud is too Loud?

Decibels	Sound Source
150	Firecracker
120	Ambulance siren
110	Chain saw, Rock concert
105	Personal stereo system at maximum level
100	Wood shop, Snowmobile
95	Motorcycle
90	Power mower
85	Heavy city traffic
60	Normal conversation
40	Refrigerator humming
30	Whispered voice
0	Threshold of normal hearing

NIOSH Noise Meter (.exe file)

Download & play the Noise Meter file on any computer, even if Flash is not installed.

****¹Hearing protection is to be made readily available to affected employees***

NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS IS PREVENTABLE!

For questions or concerns on noise or hearing protection at NMSU, call EH&S at 575-646-3327. (<http://safety.nmsu.edu>)